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Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated February 22, 2007. Prior to entry of this response, claims 9-25 were pending in the application. By way of this response, claims 15, 22 and 24 are amended, claim 25 is cancelled, and claim 26 is added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 9-14 and 18-21 are allowed.

Claim 25 is indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Formal Matters

Claims 15-17 are objected to because of the following informalities: In claim 15, line 3, "group of" has been recited twice. Claim 15 is amended to correct this typographical error. Accordingly, rejection of claims 15-17 should be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Claims 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,499,449 (Michelini). Applicants disagree with the rejection, but nonetheless have amended claim 22 to include the limitation of claim 25. As admitted by the Office action, Michelini fails to show the elements of claim 25. As such, the rejection of claim 22 should be withdrawn.

Note that Applicants have not amended claim 22 to include all of the limitations of the intervening claims, however, as Michelini is unavailable as prior art under 103(c) (see below), Applicants submit that the rejection of claim 22 is thus overcome.

Furthermore, Applicants have added new claim 26 which is similar to previous claim 22, but further includes an emission control device having a three

way catalyst. As no such feature is described in Michelini, and as noted below Michelini is unavailable under 103(c), claim 25 should be allowable.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103

Claim 24 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Michelini in view of U.S. Publication Number 2003/0131820 (McKay). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 24 because Michelini is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103, as Michelini is cited as prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). 35 U.S.C. 103(c) states that a reference cannot be used in a 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection if that reference only qualifies as prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) and was owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person at the time of invention. Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of the applied reference was owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person at the time of invention. As such, the rejection of claim 24 should be withdrawn.

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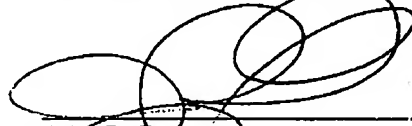
Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this Response, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No. 06-1510.

Respectfully submitted,

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